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JUL 10 1959

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Dear Neil:

With reference to your letter of July 1, 1959 proposing the resumption of high altitude flights in the Berlin corridors before July 11, you will recall that I expressed to Foreign Minister Gromyko just before our departure from Geneva the hope that nothing would be done to aggravate the situation during the period in which the Foreign Ministers' conference was in recess. Although I pointed out in this connection that our high altitude flights were not intended as a provocation but resulted merely from the operational need of new-type aircraft for higher altitudes, Gromyko reiterated the Soviet position on the question. Under the circumstances, I believe it would probably be inadvisable to resume high altitude flights before the conference reconvenes on July 11.

Once the conference has reconvened, however, I could inform Foreign Ministers Lloyd and Gouze de Marville of our intention to resume high altitude flights. At the same time I could remind Gromyko of our last conversation and tell him that, while no provocation is meant or should be taken, we are obliged to use modern aircraft in supplying our Berlin forces and that these aircraft must fly at the altitudes for which they have an operational requirement. In this general connection I think it would be helpful to our thesis if the Air Force could arrange to provide a C-130 for future trips by Ambassador Thompson into and out of Moscow.

Most sincerely,

75/ CHRISTIAN A. HERTEB

Christian A. Herteb

S/S - RO

JUL 11 1959

A true copy of signed original

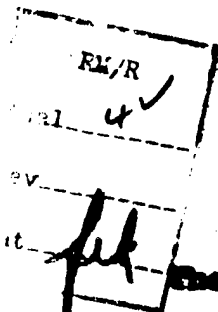
RM - Mr. Herdant O - Mr. Murphy

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C - Mr. Minner 2/2-80 - Mr. Sheffield

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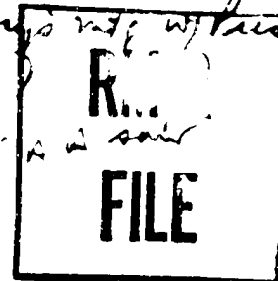
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SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

JUL 1 1959



Dear Mr. Secretary:

You will recall that I discussed with you in Geneva early in June the question of resumption of high-altitude flights in the Berlin corridor, and that it was agreed that the question would be kept under study.

I am now firmly convinced that it is most desirable to carry out a high-altitude flight in the Berlin corridor before 13 July. The United States has maintained that high-altitude flights are operationally necessary for the most effective employment of the C-130 aircraft. I am concerned that our continued failure to carry out high-altitude flights will permit the Soviets to proclaim the correctness of their statements that the flights were instituted as provocative gestures without real operational requirements.

I therefore propose that the United States carry out a high-altitude flight in the Berlin air corridor before 13 July and request your concurrence to this proposal.

Sincerely,

John F. Kennedy

The Honorable

The Secretary of State

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